

# Safety and Justice Challenge Milwaukee County Update

February 2020

The primary purpose of jails is to detain those awaiting trial who are a danger to public safety or a flight risk.

Jailing someone who is neither results in significant costs for families and communities - particularly communities of color - including lost income, parents separated from their children, untreated mental health and substance use challenges, a greater risk of re-offending, and wasted public dollars.

The Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) represents a significant investment by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to reduce over - incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

## Safety and Justice Challenge Goals

- ▶ Reduce over-reliance on local jails
- ▶ Address racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system
- ▶ Engage the broader community in system change



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

## In 2016, Milwaukee County Joined the SJC Network

Using the technical assistance and resources provided by the MacArthur Foundation, the Milwaukee Community Justice Council worked to safely reduce the average daily jail population (ADP).

2,272

Baseline ADP for  
Milwaukee County

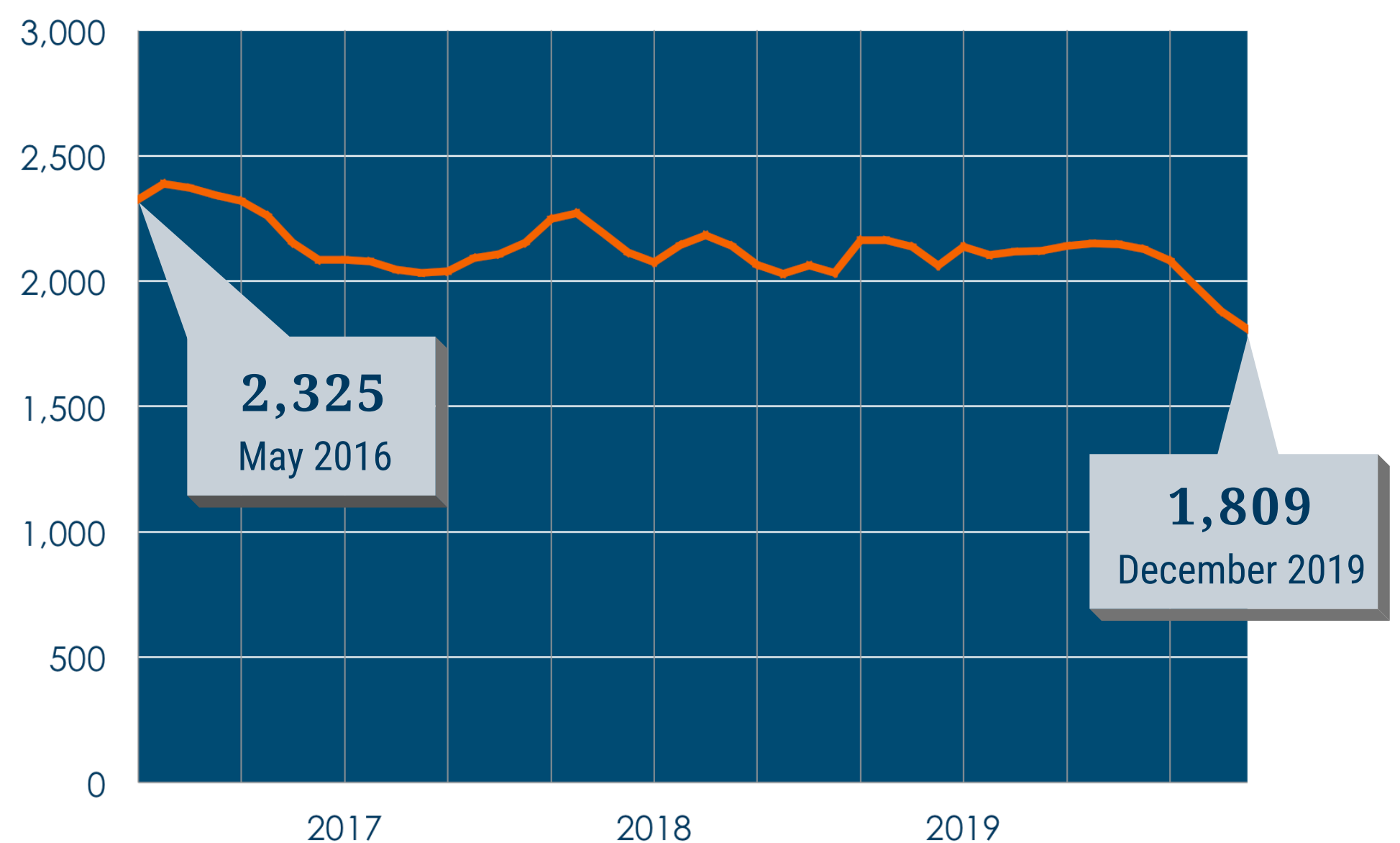


1,833

Target ADP to reach  
by May 2020

By December 2019, Milwaukee County surpassed the target ADP, reaching a **20%** reduction in its jail population without compromising public safety.

## AVERAGE DAILY JAIL POPULATION



"Jail" refers to the combined populations of the Criminal Justice Facility (CJF) and House of Correction (HOC).



# With MacArthur Foundation Support, Milwaukee Has...

- ▶ **Funded the first Crisis Assessment Response Team with countywide jurisdiction** to prevent jail admissions tied to mental health crises
- ▶ **Created a mental health diversion program and hired a behavioral health liaison** to conduct assessments in the jail and connect people to community - based services
- ▶ **Established an Expedited Disposition calendar** to decrease time to case resolution
- ▶ **Launched the Court Reminder Program** to improve court appearance rates
- ▶ **Expanded capacity for diversions and deferred prosecution agreements**
- ▶ **Instituted a policy to reduce jail bookings tied to non-violent misdemeanors**
- ▶ **Reduced incarceration due to unpaid citations** by reexamining practices around fines and fees
- ▶ **Organized 8 Home to Stay Resource Fairs** for persons returning to the community after incarceration
- ▶ **Trained 550+ criminal justice stakeholders on the impact of trauma** in the justice system



\* Relative to 2015 booking figures

## Community and System Partners are Advancing 5 Strategies to Prevent Unnecessary Jail Use and Reduce Disparities



In 2019, people of color accounted for **at least two-thirds** of Milwaukee County jail bookings



**25%** of the pretrial population screened positive for needing further mental health assessment in 2019

## Our Work Is Not Done

As the Milwaukee Community Justice Council (CJC) marks its progress to date, we recognize that opportunities remain to implement forward-thinking reforms, address disparities, use public resources more efficiently, and support individuals impacted by the justice system while protecting public safety.

To move closer towards our shared vision of a fairer, more efficient, and more effective justice system, in 2020, the CJC will collaborate with community and system partners to:

- ▶ **Launch a Jail Population Review Team** to identify system trends, racial and ethnic disparities, and cases that may be eligible for faster resolution and alternatives to incarceration
- ▶ **Complete data dashboards** to expand local data capacity and inform policy, including racial equity initiatives
- ▶ **Open a Transitions Clinic** to support people who are returning to the community after incarceration
- ▶ **Release subgrants** to fund community - led work that aligns with SJC goals
- ▶ **Start a Criminal Justice Learning Series** to increase transparency and engage community members in criminal justice priority - setting

Data Source: Milwaukee County Information Management Services



Visit [milwaukee.gov/cjc](https://milwaukee.gov/cjc) to learn more about Safety and Justice Challenge efforts in Milwaukee County.

Join the conversation to **#RethinkJails** on social media.

